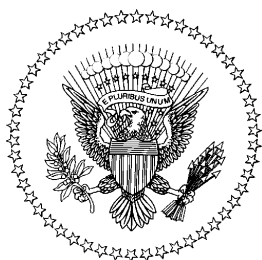


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, August 23, 1999
Volume 35—Number 33
Pages 1633–1654

Contents

Addresses and Remarks

Baby boom echo education initiative—1649
Missouri, 100th anniversary convention of the
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. in
Kansas City—1635
NCAA football champion Tennessee
Volunteers—1647
Radio address—1633
School violence, public service
announcements—1641
Turkey, earthquake—1641

Bill Signings

Military Construction Appropriations Act,
2000, statement—1644
Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small
Business Development Act of 1999,
statement—1644
Water Resources Development Act of 1999,
statement—1645

Communications to Congress

Cyprus, letter transmitting report—1652
Haiti, letter reporting on elections—1640

Communications to Federal Agencies

Delegation of Responsibilities Under the
International Religious Freedom Act of
1998, memorandum—1647

Communications to Federal Agencies— Continued

Military assistance to the Economic
Community of West African States'
Monitoring Group, memorandum—1635
Refugee admissions, memorandum on
additional—1634
U.N. War Crimes Tribunal established with
regard to the former Yugoslavia,
memorandum authorizing support—1647

Statements by the President

See also Bill Signings
Deaths
Ignaz Bubis—1646
Lane Kirkland—1634
Federal budget surplus—1652
National Household Survey on Drug Abuse—
1648

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—1654
Checklist of White House press releases—
1654
Digest of other White House
announcements—1653
Nominations submitted to the Senate—1653

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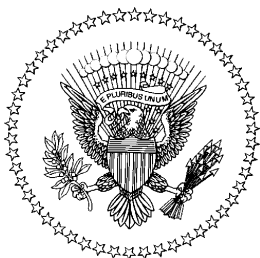
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U.N. War Crimes Tribunal established with
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Week Ending Friday, August 20, 1999

The President's Radio Address

August 14, 1999

Good morning. Throughout our history, American families have spent the summer enjoying the natural beauty of our Nation's waterways. Today more Americans than ever are spending their vacations by our beaches, our lakes, our rivers. And it's important to ensure that the water our families swim and fish in is as clean and safe as we can possibly make it.

Clean water is the most simple necessity of our lives, and we almost take it for granted. But 25 years ago, many of our waterways were so dirty they actually posed a serious threat to public health. Then Congress passed the Clean Water Act, and we began the long process of reclaiming our waterways and preserving them for the future.

For more than 6½ years now, Vice President Gore and I have worked to continue that legacy. We've strengthened the Safe Drinking Water Act, helping communities upgrade water treatment plants. We demanded more industries publicly disclose the chemicals they release into the air and water. We required water systems across the country to give customers regular reports on the safety of the water flowing from their taps. We strengthened protections for vital wetlands. And last year we launched a new clean water action plan to help finish the job the Clean Water Act started 25 years ago. We can all be proud of the progress we've made so far, but when 40 percent of our Nation's surveyed waterways are still too polluted for swimming or fishing, we know we have to do more.

Like many Americans, I was shocked to learn that several young children became gravely ill last week after swimming in a lake that may have been contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria. That is simply unacceptable. Parents have a right to expect that our recreational waters are safe for their children

to swim in. All Americans have a right to expect we're doing all we can to clean up our waterways.

So today I'm pleased to announce that we're taking new action to ensure that every river, lake, and bay in America is clean and safe. The EPA will work in partnership with States to assess the state of all our waterways, to identify the most polluted waters, and to develop strong, enforceable plans to restore them to health. These steps will chart a course to clean up 20,000 waterways, and ensure that they remain safe for generations to come. But just as we're taking new action to preserve our environment for future generations, the Republican leadership in Congress is laying plans to roll back more than a quarter century of bipartisan progress in public health and environmental protection.

Without explanation or excuse, the Republicans' spending bills slash important environmental initiatives, like our lands legacy program to preserve natural treasures, farms, urban parks, wetlands, and other green spaces. They shortchange vital research and development programs that address the threat of global warming, that help us to develop alternative fuels in vehicles that pollute less and to make the maximum use of available energy conservation technologies. And their spending bills are also loaded with unrelated provisions that would sacrifice crucial environmental protections for the sake of special interests. I vetoed bills before because they contain such anti-environmental riders, and if necessary, I'm prepared to do it again.

The budget of the Republican leadership isn't simply turning back the clock on environmental protection. It's also turning its back on 6 years of fiscal responsibility and prudent investment, a policy that's produced the strongest economy in a generation, the longest peacetime expansion in our history, the largest surplus in our history.

Their budget plan, because it contains such a large tax cut, would actually threaten our environment because it would require big cuts in environmental enforcement, letting toxic waste dumps fester, even shutting down national parks. In addition to that, we'd have across-the-board cuts in everything from education to medical research to defense, and they wouldn't add a day to the life of the Social Security or Medicare Trust Fund, nor would they pay off the debt.

Our budget continues to invest in the environment and education and medical research and defense. It pays off the debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835, and it lengthens the life of the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds. It's a good budget, and it also provides for a modest tax cut.

We have proved time and again that we don't have to choose between growing our economy or preserving our environment. We can do both with discipline. So again, I ask Congress, let's put politics aside and continue the commonsense course that is already leading us toward a cleaner environment, a stronger economy, and a stronger America for the 21st century. Let's work together to give our children the gift of a better, healthier world.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:04 p.m. on August 12 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Death of Lane Kirkland

August 14, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the passing of Lane Kirkland, one of the towering figures in the American labor movement. For nearly five decades, he was a guiding force for workplace fairness, dignity, and innovation, and a catalyst for international democracy.

Lane led the AFL-CIO during 15 of the most challenging years in labor's history. With skill, determination, and unparalleled intellect, he reunited the major unions and

reaffirmed labor's place at the table of American democracy. With his unflagging support of free trade unionism internationally, especially in Poland, he helped hasten the fall of the Iron Curtain while showing America that it is possible to stand up to communism abroad while standing up for working men and women here at home. From his days as a merchant marine during World War II to his work on the Board of Directors of the Institute of Peace, he was always ready and willing to serve his country. I valued his friendship, strong support, and keen advice. He was a great American, and he will be greatly missed.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Irena, and his family in this time of mourning.

Memorandum on Additional Refugee Admissions

August 12, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-33

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Emergency Presidential Determination on Additional FY 99 Refugee Admissions Numbers Pursuant to Section 207(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act

In accordance with section 207(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the "Act") (8 U.S.C. 1157(b)), and after appropriate consultations with the Congress, I hereby determine that an unforeseen refugee emergency exists in Europe, and that the admission to the United States of Kosovar refugees in response to this emergency is justified by grave humanitarian concerns and is in the national interest. The admission of these refugees cannot be accomplished under the worldwide refugee admissions ceiling of 78,000 for Fiscal Year 1999, as authorized in Presidential Determination 98-39 of September 30, 1998, and an increase to 91,000 is warranted. The revised regional allocations are as follows:

Africa	12,000
East Asia	9,000
Europe	61,000
Latin America/Caribbean	3,000

Near East/South Asia	4,000
Unallocated	2,000

The provisions of Presidential Determination 98-39 are retained, except to the extent superseded by this determination.

You are hereby directed to report this determination to the Congress immediately and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 16.

**Memorandum on Military Assistance
to the Economic Community of West
African States' Monitoring Group**
August 13, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-34

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the
Secretary of Defense*

Subject: Determination to Authorize the
Furnishing of Nonlethal Emergency Military
Assistance to the States Participating in the
Economic Community of West African
States' Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)
Under Section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign
Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by
section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance
Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C.
2318(a)(1) (the "Act"), I hereby determine
that:

- (1) an unforeseen emergency exists that
requires immediate military assist-
ance to states currently participating
in, and to states that may in the future
participate in, ECOMOG; and
- (2) the emergency requirement cannot
be met under the authority of the
Arms Export Control Act or any other
law except section 506(a)(1) of the
Act.

Therefore, I direct the drawdown from the
inventory and resources of the Department
of Defense of an aggregate value not to ex-
ceed \$3 million in defense articles from the
stocks of the Department of Defense, de-
fense services of the Department of Defense,
and military education and training, to pro-

vide drawdown assistance to the states cur-
rently participating (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra
Leone, Mali, and Guinea), and to those states
that in the future may participate, in
ECOMOG to enhance ECOMOG's capabili-
ties to participate in efforts to restore peace
and security in Sierra Leone.

The Secretary of State is authorized and
directed to report this determination to the
Congress and to arrange for its publication
in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office
of the Press Secretary on August 16.

**Remarks at the Veterans of Foreign
Wars of the United States 100th
National Convention in Kansas City,
Missouri**

August 16, 1999

Thank you very much, Commander
Pouliot; distinguished officers of the VFW;
Congressman Skelton, Congressman Moore,
Congresswoman Kaptur; Secretary West and
Deputy Secretary Gober; ladies and gentle-
men. It is a great honor for me to be here
in Kansas City today to help to celebrate a
hundred proud years for the Veterans of For-
eign Wars. You should clap for yourselves.
[Applause] That's good.

I'd like to begin with just a few reflections
of what these 100 years mean for you and
for the United States. We are less than 150
days now from the beginning of one century
and the end of another, which many have
called the American Century. Lately, there
have been a number of looks back at the peo-
ple and personalities and events that made
this 20th century: the leaders who led free-
dom's triumph over tyranny, like Roosevelt,
Eisenhower, Marshall; inventors like the
Wright brothers, whose ideas changed the
way we lived; moral forces like Martin Luther
King and Eleanor Roosevelt, whose ideas and
examples changed the world; scientists like
Dr. Jonas Salk, whose discoveries liberated
a generation of parents from the mortal fear
that their children would have polio and be
crippled. But if you ask who has been most
responsible for making this the American

Century, one answer would be at the top of anyone's list after two World Wars and a long cold war. That answer would be America's service men and women.

Today, as we celebrate your centennial anniversary, we must never forget that tens, even hundreds of millions of people, in the United States and all around the world sleep in peace because hundreds of thousands of Americans rest in peace in graves, marked and unmarked, all across the world, fallen veterans of foreign wars.

It is no accident, therefore, that the American Century also marks the VFW century. For over the last 100 years, America's men and women have sacrificed whatever was necessary, not for territorial gain, nor for the domination of others, but to secure the rights and freedoms of others so that Americans might have their freedom secure. You have made our Nation proud.

Thanks to you, we will begin a new century with a truly historic achievement, for in the last few years, for the first time in all of human history, more than half the world's people live under free governments freely elected. Still, you and I know this is not a world free from danger. There is the potential for major wars, rooted in ethnic and religious hatred. There is the chance that former adversaries will not succeed in their transition to democracy and could become adversaries again. There is the risk that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons will fall into the wrong hands. There is the risk of terrorist groups with increasing access to money, to technology, to sophisticated weaponry. There is the possibility that global financial vulnerabilities could overwhelm free societies. Therefore, we cannot assume that, because we are today secure and at peace, we don't need military strength or alliances or that, because we are today prosperous, we are immune from turmoil half a world away.

America must still be engaged in the world, working with others to advance peace and prosperity, freedom and security, and America must remain strong. That is what our most recent conflict in Kosovo was all about. I want to thank you profoundly for the support the VFW gave us during the conflict there. I know it wasn't easy for you to do. We were still in the early stages of the

longest and most difficult military campaign in the 50-year history of NATO. Critics were convinced from the beginning that we could not succeed. But you stood with us, and more importantly, you stood with our men and women in uniform. NATO and the United States prevailed. We are all grateful for your support.

Many of you in this room today fought in World War II against the tyrants who preached racial and religious superiority. In Kosovo, innocent men, women, and children were systematically targeted for killing and mass expulsion by their governments simply because of their ethnic heritage or the way they chose to worship God. After World War II, after ending the 4-year war of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, NATO could not accept that kind of behavior on its own borders. It could not stand by, once again, and see people driven from their homes, loaded on railcars, having their history erased.

So, instead, the century ends with a powerful statement by NATO's 19 democracies, reaffirming human life and human dignity, giving us the chance after two World Wars, the cold war, and the Balkan conflicts, for the first time ever to have an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe. It shares our values, strengthens our economy, helps us meet our common aspirations, and will not call young Americans to go there to fight and die in the 21st century.

We prevailed in Kosovo because our cause was just, our goals were clear, our Alliance were strong, and our strategy worked, thanks to the performance of our men and women in uniform. In 78 days, they flew more than 37,000 support and strike sorties in the face of constant danger, including surface-to-air missiles. Many times our pilots risked their lives because they would not fire back at the Serb gunners who were positioned in heavily populated areas and they didn't want to kill innocent civilians.

In the end, thank God we had zero combat fatalities and only two planes shot down. That is an astonishing record and a tribute to the professionalism we see every day from our military forces the world over. They are good people. They are good people who are well-trained, well-led, and well-equipped. Rigorous training is critical and, as all of you

know, dangerous in and of itself. Indeed, we must always remember our two Army airmen who died in training exercises in Albania during the Kosovo conflict. And we thank God there weren't more casualties in Kosovo, in part because the men and women trained so hard with the world's best equipment. As long as I am President, I intend to keep the commitment I made from the first day of our administration that our men and women in uniform will remain the best trained, the best equipped, the best prepared military in the entire world.

All of you know we have challenges in keeping that commitment. Thanks to the strength of our economy, in part, we're having a harder time recruiting and keeping some of our best people. And we have a lot of tough decisions to make to maintain the readiness of our equipment and to keep ahead of the latest generation in military developments. I have asked Congress for the support necessary to deal with these challenges. I believe it will be forthcoming, and I ask for your support in making sure that it is.

We also recognize another simple truth here, on your centennial: The troops of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to veterans today. Way back in 1903, Theodore Roosevelt said, "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards."

One of the great privileges I have had in being President is to work for and with our country's veterans and their organizations. The White House doors have been open to veterans, to help to shape policy affecting veterans, especially when it comes to critical matters like health care. Early in our administration, Hershel Gober recommended that we look for ways to bring health care closer to veterans who needed it. Since then we have opened more than 600 outpatient clinics all across America and have more planned over the next 2 years. We expect to treat 400,000 more veterans this year than last year.

We've also confronted some long-neglected problems head on. We've reached out to more than 40,000 veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, to tell them about

the expanded benefits available to them. I pressed hard for answers to the Gulf war syndrome and proper care for those who suffer from it. We are in the process of building five new national cemeteries, the most since the Civil War. And we are making a special effort to end something I know is unacceptable to all of us here today, homeless veterans. They should be brought back into the society they did so much to defend.

In all these efforts, I want to thank Secretary West, his predecessor, Secretary Brown, and Deputy Secretary Gober and all those at the Department of Veterans Affairs that have worked so hard to reach out to you and to work with you. We know there is more to do.

As Vice President Gore announced last month, we will continue to work with the VFW and others to make sure that all veterans receive the high-quality care they deserve next year and every year, and we expect this year's budget to reflect that commitment.

I would like to make another point today. Standing by our military and standing by our veterans means more than simply preparing people to fight wars and taking care of them after they wear our Nation's uniform. We must also work with equal determination to prevent wars. That means paying attention not only to military readiness, but to diplomatic readiness as well. We know that if diplomacy is not backed by real, credible threats of force, it can be empty, indeed, dangerous. But if we don't use diplomacy first to promote our interests, if we rely on our military as the only line of defense, it almost certainly will become our only line of defense.

Of course, international engagement costs money, but the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war. Ever since I became President, I've been trying hard to convince Congress of that basic truth. It has been a considerable challenge. Our international affairs programs, which fund everything from resolving conflicts to strengthening young democracies, to combating terrorism, to fighting dangerous drugs, to promoting our exports, to maintaining our Embassies all around the world, amount to less than one percent of the Federal budget and less than

one-fifteenth of our defense budget. But I regret to say that since 1985 these programs have been cut significantly. This year the House and Senate have passed spending bills that would cut our request for international affairs by more than \$2 billion. In other words, we're cutting the very programs designed to keep our soldiers out of war in the first place.

Underfunding our arsenal of peace is as risky as underfunding our arsenal for war. For if we continue to underfund diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises that we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. If this trend continues, there will be real consequences for important American interests.

Let me mention just a few, beginning with our interest in peace and stability across the Atlantic. Today, after the victory in Kosovo and in Bosnia, we have an opportunity to invest in peace so that future wars do not occur there. The people of the Balkans have been crippled by conflict, really, since the end of the cold war. Today, we have a chance to integrate them with each other and into the mainstream of Europe, where they will have strong incentives to maintain democracy and good behavior and avoid conflicts.

To do this, we don't need anything as ambitious as the Marshall plan. And whatever is done, we must insist that our European partners carry most of the load and that Balkan leaders themselves take responsibility for changing their policies. Still, the United States should be a part of this process. If we don't and the effort fails, make no mistake, there will be another bloody war that starts in the Balkans and spreads throughout southeastern Europe. And some day, more young Americans may be asked to risk their lives at far greater cost than our part of the rebuilding of the region.

If we are to succeed in winning the peace, we may see a 21st century—I'll say again—in which we do not have to send the young people of America to fight in another European war. That is a worthy objective. We have seen enough wars in Europe, claiming the lives of their children and America's young people. Now we have a chance to avoid it, and we ought to take the chance.

We also have a responsibility to protect American people from the dangers most likely to surface in the 21st century. The gravest of those may not be another country launching a nuclear weapon but that weapons of mass destruction will fall into the hands of terrorists and their rogue-state sponsors. We have worked to reduce that doomsday scenario. Since 1992, our support has helped to deactivate almost 5,000 nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union; to eliminate nuclear weapons from three former Soviet republics; to strengthen the security of weapons and materials at over 100 sites; to tighten export controls in Russia and to purchase hundreds of tons, literally hundreds of tons, of highly enriched uranium that otherwise could be used for nuclear weapons that end up in the wrong hands.

This effort has received strong bipartisan support in the Congress for which I am very grateful. Today, the Russian economy is struggling, as we all know. The average salary of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia—listen to this—the average salary of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia is less than \$100 a month.

Now, for a small investment, we can help them turn that expertise to peaceful projects that help the world and draw a living wage doing it. Or we can do nothing and pray that each and every one of those thousands of scientists will somehow resist the temptation to market their expertise to those who wish to do us and the cause of freedom harm. Common sense says to me that we ought to give them something useful and good to do and let them make a decent living.

That's why, in my State of the Union Address, I proposed increasing funding for threat reduction by two-thirds over the next 5 years. I want to work with Congress to make these investments to make the world a safer place.

Another challenge is to create a durable and comprehensive peace in the region that every President since Richard Nixon has considered among the most dangerous in the world, the Middle East. Today, we have a real opportunity to do that. The new Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, formerly the commander of all Israel's military forces, has

set forth an ambitious agenda to reach agreement within the next 15 months and to move the process beyond the setbacks of recent years.

Both Israelis and Palestinians now are determined to move forward. But the enemies of peace stand ready to strike to undercut this path. That is why last fall, when the two sides made a commitment to peace at the Wye River talks, we made a commitment to them, as well. As the United States has done ever since the Camp David accords in the late 1970's, we told the Israelis that we would help them minimize the risks of peace and lift the lives of the Palestinian people. We told the Jordanians that we would help promote their safety and their well-being.

Now, I know that's a long way away. But you know if there's a full-scale war in the Middle East, it will affect our interests and our values. The Middle East is home to all three of the world's great religions that hold we are created by one God. We have a chance to see it become a place of peace. If it becomes again a place of war, it will cost us far more than investing in a common, shared, peaceful future. The conflict has gone on for too long. We have a historic opportunity to end it. If the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Jordanians—ultimately, the Syrians and the Lebanese—if they all are willing to do their part, we must do ours, and we ought to begin by keeping our word to fund the Wye River peace process.

We also have an opportunity, believe it or not, to move beyond a series of cruel conflicts in Africa. In the last 3 weeks, in efforts led not by the United States, although we supported them, but by the African countries themselves, we have seen signs for hope in the resolution of devastating conflicts, especially in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has claimed more than 70,000 lives already. We have seen the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria, hold a democratic election and bring to an end 15 years of misrule. All this is very good news. It means that the largest untapped market for our products in the world, a continent of over 700 million people, that provides nearly as much oil to us as we get from the Middle East, will now have a chance to develop in

freedom and peace and shared prosperity with us and other freedom-loving people.

Now, the African countries don't want the United States to solve their problems or to deploy our military. All they've asked us to do, at a small cost, is to support their efforts to resolve conflicts on their own, to keep the peace, to build better lives for their people, and to develop competent militaries. These efforts don't make a lot of headlines. I'll bet most of you don't know much about them. That's good, because the point is to avoid headlines, headlines about famine and refugee crisis and genocide, and to replace them, instead, with stories of partnership and shared prosperity. These are the stories we can write now, again, if Congress will invest only a tiny portion of what we spend on defense on avoiding war in the first place.

Finally, there is the question of the United Nations. One of the great legacies of our victory in World War II is an institution where nations seek to resolve differences with words instead of weapons. Paying our dues to that organization is a legal and a moral responsibility. It ought to be reason enough to do so. If we fail to do so soon, the United States will actually lose its vote in the General Assembly.

But obligation is not the only reason for doing this, so is opportunity. The U.N. helps us to mobilize the support of other nations for goals Americans cherish, from keeping the peace to immunizing children, to caring for refugees, to combating the spread of deadly weapons. We've been working with growing success to make sure that the U.N. operates better, at lower cost.

But we have to do our part. Unless we want America to pay all the costs and take all the risks to solve the world's big problems, we have to work with others, and that means paying our fair share of dues, like every other country does, to the United Nations.

The bottom line is this: Today we have a unique opportunity and a real responsibility to advance the values in the world won in the 20th century over the last 100 years by America's veterans. But if we have only one arrow in our quiver, our military, we sacrifice the work of peace and increase the risk of war. We have to do our part to keep the world on a stable path toward democracy,

the democracy that every single one of you put your lives on the line to defend.

That's how President Truman felt. Fifty years ago this week he spoke to you at the VFW's Golden Jubilee Convention. Listen to what he said, and you can feel it here, because we're not very far from his hometown. Harry Truman said, "Peace with freedom and justice cannot be bought cheaply. It can only be assured by the combined efforts of the multitudes of people throughout the world who want a secure peace. We must keep them our friends if the world is to be a decent place for our children and their grandchildren to live." Harry Truman was a pretty smart fellow.

Just 2 months ago I visited a refugee camp full of Kosovar Albanians in Macedonia. I wish every one of you could have been there. As I walked through the camp, these young children started chanting spontaneously, "U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.," thanking Americans for giving them a chance to reclaim their lives in their native land. They've all gone home now, by the way, over 90 percent of the refugees from Kosovo are home.

But it reminded me of my trip to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-day, in 1994. In Normandy, we all heard stories, from our veterans, of French citizens who came up to them, took their hands, and told them that they were very young, 50 years ago, but they would always remember what Americans did for them and what it meant to them. I hope that in 50 years, some of our veterans from the conflict in Kosovo will go back there, and the children from that refugee camp, who will then be in their middle years, will take their hands and say, "50 years ago I was chanting, 'U.S.A., U.S.A.,' with my voice, but I still chant with my heart." We are very grateful to you, all of you.

So on this centennial anniversary, on behalf of a grateful nation and grateful people throughout the world, I say to every soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and coastguardsman, to every man and woman who fought bravely for our Nation and brought dignity to the world, thank you for a job well done. May we look forward to a century in which all your sacrifice and all your service is honored

and redeemed with the greatest peace and prosperity the world has ever known.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in Hall E at the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas A. Pouliot, commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Elections in Haiti

August 16, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 561(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (FOAA), as enacted in Public Law 105-277, I hereby report to the Congress that the central Government of Haiti: (1) has achieved a transparent settlement of the contested April 1997 elections, and (2) has made concrete progress on the constitution of a credible and competent provisional electoral council that is acceptable to a broad spectrum of political parties and civic groups in Haiti. Section 561(b) states that funds appropriated by the FOAA and made available to support elections in Haiti shall not be restricted if I report to the Congress that the central Government of Haiti has met the two aforementioned criteria.

The first criterion in section 561(b) of the FOAA, a transparent settlement of the contested April 1997 elections, was cumulatively met by a public declaration by the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) on June 11 and the promulgation of the Electoral Law, which was published in the national gazette *Le Moniteur* July 19, and republished with corrections July 22. Taken together, these two acts establish that 19 Senate seats will be run in the legislative and local elections projected for late 1999. Included in this number are the two still-contested Senate seats from April 1997. Article 63 of the Electoral Law specifically states "the number of Senators to be elected in the upcoming elections shall be determined by the CEP." This authority

is also provided in Article 16. Article 130 states that the elections are to fill Senate seats vacant by "fact or law."

Pursuant to its authority to determine which seats will be competed, the CEP declared publicly on June 11 that it "has decided to call elections to fill all Senate positions currently vacant, whether *de facto* or *de jure*, without distinction." In a number of subsequent public statements, as well as in private assurances to the Embassy and others in the international community, CEP officials explicitly and unanimously reiterated that because there are presently eight sitting Senators and the Constitution calls for a Senate of 27 Senators, a total of 19 Senate seats will be competed, including the two still-contested positions.

The second criterion, concrete progress on constituting a competent, credible, and broadly acceptable CEP, was achieved March 16 when President Preval announced that nine-member body's composition after consultations with the five-party *Espace de Concertation*. Since that time, the CEP has performed in a competent, even-handed, and credible manner and has been deemed acceptable even by parties and movements who stand in staunch opposition to the government.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at the Unveiling Ceremony for Public Service Announcements on School Violence

August 17, 1999

Leilani, most people twice your age couldn't do that. [*Laughter*]

Earthquake in Turkey

Ladies and gentlemen, because this is my first chance of the week to speak to the press, before we get on to showing the spot I have to say just a couple of words about the awful earthquake that occurred in Turkey, which I'm sure a lot of you have heard about. It

has claimed hundreds of lives and many injuries.

So let me begin by saying, on behalf of all Americans, our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. Most of you know that Turkey has been our friend and ally for a long time now. We must stand with them and do whatever we can to help them get through this terrible crisis.

We've already released aid for the Turkish Red Crescent. We're sending a team to Turkey to help with search and rescue today. Our Energy Secretary, Bill Richardson, and General Hugh Shelton, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, are actually in Turkey, and they have personally conveyed our willingness to provide additional assistance. General Shelton has met with his Turkish counterpart to offer the military's help with disaster relief. And we will continue to determine what further help is needed. But you can only imagine how difficult this is for them, and we will do what we can to help.

School Violence

Now, let me thank Leilani again and Wyatt Keusch and Harrison Boatwright, who are the young people here with us, who are also in the PSA. I want to thank Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno, who have really done a wonderful job of trying to have a coordinated and balanced approach to keeping our children safe. Governor Romer, thank you. I want to thank all the people here from the entertainment industry, Jack and Richard and Eddie, Sheila and all the others who stood up. Thank you so much for your generosity and your farsightedness. Thank you, Peggy Conlon, you're a great spokesperson for the people you represent, and you've been great in helping us to get this far. And I want to thank my long-time friend Drew Altman and the Kaiser Foundation for their support in this endeavor. I'd also like to thank the young AmeriCorps members who are here today, who spent a lot of time working with our young people and trying to help them stay safe. This is a very important issue to Hillary, to me, to our entire administration.

In 2 weeks Leilani's going to start at a brand new school. That's probably more scary than introducing the President to a

bunch of strangers. [Laughter] And you know, there are always a lot of worries associated with going to a new school: All these strange people—are they going to like me? Am I going to like them? You've got to get to know the teachers; you've just got to find your way around; got to remember the combination to a new locker. [Laughter] Those are the things that our kids ought to be worried about.

They shouldn't be worried about whether what they saw in Littleton or Conyers or what that young madman in Illinois and Indiana or at the Jewish community center in L.A. could possibly happen to them. That's what they shouldn't worry about. But they do because they've seen the press reports and so has our entire Nation.

We're still grieving for the young children, the teacher, the counselor, the receptionist, at the Jewish community center, or the family of that young Filipino-American, Joseph Iletto, who was killed only because he was an Asian-American who worked for his country's government.

Secretary Riley has gone across the country trying to make sure that all of us can put this in some kind of context. The Attorney General has, as well. The crime rate in this country's at a 26-year low; juvenile crime is going down; the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education show that overall violence has actually decreased in our schools. It's important to tell these children here with us today, and others, that the chances of a tragedy happening are small, less than they used to be, less than one in a million.

But that's not good enough when you see how horrible it is when it occurs. Schools ought to be right next to our houses of worship as sanctuaries in America. They ought to be places where young people are completely safe and absolutely certain that they are. And each of us bears a responsibility. If Hillary is right that it takes a village to raise a child, it will take our whole national village to keep the Nation's children safe in their schools.

A big part of that responsibility lies with parents and giving parents and their children the capacity and courage to communicate with one another. And that's a big part of

why we're here to launch this public service campaign.

As you will see in a moment, the PSA sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation, by Children Now, and the Ad Council sends out a powerful call to action: If you're a child and you see someone committing violence or even just talking about it—that's very important, given the evidence we now have about the situation in Colorado and others—if you see someone just talking about it, the best thing you can do is to first tell your parents. And if you're a parent, you have to take it seriously. You have to sit down and talk and listen, to draw your children out, to give them a chance to express their fears, to give you early warning, and then to share that early warning with your children's teachers and principal.

This is an important message, so I'd like to, again, with thanks to all concerned, turn the lights out and watch the ad.

[The public service announcement video was shown.]

The President. Thanks to the commitment of America's broadcast and cable networks and cable channels, this ad and others like it will be seen by just about every single person in America who turns on the television tomorrow night, during the family hour of prime time.

This so-called television roadblock is really unprecedented. The networks are donating a million and a half dollars of free air time in one night alone. That's more blanket coverage than I get for the State of the Union. [Laughter] Many of the networks have already pledged to continue airing these PSA's during different timeslots for the remainder of this year.

So let me say once again, I am very, very grateful to all the people involved who have fulfilled the commitment that they made at our youth violence summit in May, to use the power of your medium to send out positive messages to our children. This is a kind of thing we can do when we work together, and we need to continue to do so and to include all parts of our society.

You remember that when we had the national summit, the First Lady and I said we wanted to organize a national campaign

against youth violence, to have the same sort of galvanizing impact on our people that Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against—I think it's now called Destructive Decisions, the campaign to promote seatbelt use. These grassroots campaigns can have a profound effect on the way Americans think and the way they behave. It will be much, much easier now, because of the work that all of you involved in the media have done to bring these public service spots to the people of the United States. But we also need our organized campaign.

So today I have the honor of announcing and introducing the person who will be the executive director of this campaign. His name is Jeff Bleich, and he's here with us on stage. He's been recognized by the American Bar Association as one of our country's leading young attorneys. He's also one of San Francisco's leading civic-minded citizens. He is the father of three beautiful children he desperately wants to have a safe childhood. He has received several prestigious awards for his pro bono legal service. He's built strong connections in Silicon Valley and in Hollywood, both of whom can be of immense help to us in this endeavor. And perhaps most important, he has written a very fine book on youth violence. So I'd like to ask Jeff to stand up, and to thank him for his service. *[Applause]* And thank you for taking on this challenge to protect our children.

Today the Department of Justice is also releasing \$15 million to fund innovative partnerships between local police and school and community groups, something the Attorney General has been pushing since the first day she came here. These partnerships will help schools do everything from training students in conflict resolution techniques to combating drug dealing and use on school grounds.

But as every police officer in America knows, we're kidding ourselves if we think we can conquer youth violence without addressing one of its undeniable catalysts, the appalling ease with which young people gain access to guns. Hillary has already said, and you know that I strongly agree, it is long past time for Congress to step up to its responsibility, and restore some common sense, sanity, and strength to our Nation's gun laws.

Today I ask the Republican majority: When you come back to work, our children will be going back to school; think about them; let's not wait until the next senseless tragedy to pass commonsense gun safety measures to protect them.

Now, I know in a country of 270 million people, and tens of millions of guns, no law can stop every disturbed person from committing a violent act with a gun. But we would never do anything, as a people, if we gave in to the objection that all of our actions would have less than 100 percent impact. The Brady bill has kept over 400,000 gun sales, which should not have occurred, from happening. It has saved countless lives. Closing the gun show loophole will have the same impact. Closing the loopholes in the assault weapons ban will have the same impact.

Doing these other things—will they solve every problem? No. Will they stop every act of violence? No. Will they prevent every madman? No. If we used that kind of excuse, we would all stay in bed every day. We would never get out of bed. We would never get out of bed. We would never hit a lick. So we need all the tools at our disposal. Look what these media people have done. Will this public service ad get every parent in America and every child to talk about every dangerous thing that happens at every school? No. But it will have a huge impact.

And so if the media people are doing their part and the school people are doing their part and the law enforcement people are doing their part, it is time to pass the reasonable and entirely modest measures before the Congress. For those who want to do more, I say, so do I. But that is no reason not to do this. This will make a difference. And it is certainly not an argument not to do it, that it won't solve every problem. It will save some lives, and we ought to do it.

We have got to work together. That's what our national campaign is about; that is the message that the Ad Council is putting out in these ads; and down deep inside, that's what all of us know we need to do, so that when we see children like Leilani—don't you wish all you ever had to worry about was that the kid you're pulling for can get through the speech in front of the strangers—*[laughter]*—can make it through the athletic event,

can play the solo or sing the song that is so excruciatingly difficult the first time you did it? These are the things that our children ought to be worried about. We ought to give our kids back their childhood. And we can do it, if we do it together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to students Leilani Tassillio, who introduced the President, Wyatt Keusch, and Harrison Boatwright; Jack Valenti, president and chief executive officer, Motion Pictures Association of America, Inc.; Richard Masur, president, Screen Actors Guild; Edward O. Fritts, president and chief executive officer, National Association of Broadcasters; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, board member, and Peggy Conlon, president and chief executive officer, Ad Council; and Drew E. Altman, president and chief executive officer, Henry J. Kaiser Foundation.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999

August 17, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1568, the "Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999." This bill will provide assistance to veterans who are entrepreneurs and especially to service-disabled veteran entrepreneurs, men and women who have sacrificed so much in the service of our country. By helping these American heroes to establish, maintain, and grow their own small businesses, we help to sustain our strong economy and express our gratitude for their service to America.

This bill also includes several measures designed to cushion the impact on small businesses when their owners or essential employees who are reservists are ordered to active duty during military conflicts. By providing loans, loan payment deferrals, and technical and managerial assistance for these citizen soldiers, we can help ensure that they do not have to risk their livelihoods while they risk their lives.

I do have a constitutional concern regarding the section of the bill that addresses the composition of the government corporation

that will provide assistance to veterans in the formation and expansion of small businesses. This provision unjustifiably intrudes upon the President's constitutional authority and discretion to appoint executive officials, and, therefore, I will treat this provision as precatory.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 17, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1568, approved August 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-50.

Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2000

August 17, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2465, the "Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2000," which provides funding for military construction and family housing programs of the Department of Defense (DOD).

The Act funds the vast majority of my request for military construction projects, the military housing program, and other quality-of-life projects for our military personnel and their families. The requested projects are critical to supporting military readiness and the quality of life of our soldiers and their families. However, I have several concerns with the bill:

- For the second consecutive year, the Congress has not provided the requested level of construction funding for the Chemical Weapons Demilitarization program. This year's reduction of \$93 million to my request substantially increases the risk that the United States will not meet the 2007 Chemical Weapons Convention deadline for the destruction of these chemical weapons. The sooner these weapons are destroyed, the safer we will all be.
- The Congress has chosen to add funds for projects that DOD has not identified as priorities. In particular, \$301 million is provided for 40 projects that are not in DOD's Future Years Defense Program (FYDP).

- The Congress has again included a provision (section 113) that requires the Secretary of Defense to give 30 days advance notice to certain congressional committees of any proposed military exercise involving construction costs anticipated to exceed \$100,000. In approving H.R. 2465, I wish to reiterate an understanding, expressed by Presidents Reagan and Bush when they signed Military Construction Appropriations Acts containing a similar provision, that this section encompasses only exercises for which providing 30 days advance notice is feasible and consistent with my constitutional authority and duty to protect the national security.

I urge the Congress to pass all of the FY 2000 appropriations bills as quickly as possible and send them to me in an acceptable form. As of today, the Congress has finished its work on only two of the thirteen appropriations bills. Moreover, many of the remaining bills would require deep cuts in essential government programs, including education, law enforcement, science and technology, the environment, and programs to advance global security through the peaceful use of diplomacy, helping minimize our chances of needing to use military force to the same ends.

When it returns in September, the Congress still has a great deal of work to do. I urge the Congress to approach this work responsibly in order to pass funding bills which are sufficient to meet our Nation's needs in the year 2000.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 17, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2465, approved August 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-52.

Statement on Signing the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 *August 17, 1999*

Today I have signed into law S. 507, the "Water Resources Development Act of 1999," a multibillion dollar omnibus bill to authorize water projects and programs of the

United States Army Corps of Engineers. I am pleased that the Act includes some program reforms, as well as a number of authorizations for projects and programs that are important to the Nation, but I also have serious reservations about this bill.

I am pleased that the bill increases flood protection for Sacramento, California, and that the Congress accepted a reform proposed by my Administration to optimize the use of Folsom Dam, a Federal facility protecting the city. However, I am disappointed that the Congress did not authorize other features needed to provide the higher level of flood protection sought by my Administration. I am committed to working with the Congress to reduce further the risk of flood damage facing this community.

In 1998, I proposed an innovative approach to integrate Federal flood protection and environmental restoration efforts: the "Challenge 21" program. I am pleased that the Congress has embraced this proposal and has included a \$200 million authorization for it in this bill. The bill also removes impediments to better flood plain management and broadens the tools available to communities that seek to reduce their risk of flood damage. The bill will promote the use of effective, nonstructural means to address flooding concerns and complement efforts across the Nation to restore the environmental value of flood plains and aquatic ecosystems.

I support the bill's authorization to develop and implement a comprehensive fish and wildlife habitat restoration plan for the Missouri River and to increase the amount of land along the river corridor authorized for acquisition from willing sellers. These authorizations will allow us to recreate a string of natural areas along the length of this great American river once traveled by Lewis and Clark. The legislation also includes an important authorization to study the effects of bank stabilization on the Yellowstone River, the Nation's last major freely meandering river.

On July 1, 1999, my Administration transmitted to the Congress its comprehensive long-term plan to restore the Florida Everglades, which is one of our national treasures. I am pleased that S. 507 continues the authority for related Federal water resources projects in South Florida and look forward

to working with the Congress over the next year to authorize the first steps in this important restoration effort.

I also support several of the bill's provisions that authorize improvements to our Nation's ports and harbors. I urge the Congress to enact my proposed Harbor Services Fund legislation, which will ensure a stable source of funding to improve our national port infrastructure and meet the demands of the global economy.

I am disappointed, however, in many of the provisions of S. 507. The amount of construction spending authorized in S. 507—over \$4 billion in new Federal spending—far exceeds a reasonable assessment of the available future Federal budgetary resources for the Corps of Engineers program. With an existing construction backlog of more than \$27 billion of Army Corps of Engineers water resources projects, it would require nearly 20 years at current funding levels just to complete all of the ongoing projects that the Congress previously has authorized. This legislation will place significant further stress on the funding capabilities of this program and create expectations for future funding that are not likely to be forthcoming.

Roughly three-quarters of the significant new projects in this Act and many of its project modifications are still in the planning stage or undergoing review and, therefore, simply are not ready for authorization at this time. Until the completion of the review required for proposed Federal water resources projects under Executive Order 12322, neither the Executive branch nor the Congress is likely to know which of these projects will raise significant concerns regarding their scope, economic and technical feasibility, environmental acceptability, or the ability of local sponsors to provide the required cost-share.

This legislation authorizes nearly \$900 million for local environmental infrastructure and other projects that may be worthwhile, but most of which should not become a responsibility of the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, although S. 507 would reduce Federal costs for future shore protection projects and is a first step towards establishing a more equitable sharing of their substan-

tial long-term costs, it does not go far enough.

My Administration will work with the Congress on the next water projects authorization bill for the Army Corps of Engineers to address these problems.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 17, 1999.

NOTE: S. 507, approved August 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-53.

Statement on the Death of Ignaz Bubis

August 17, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Ignaz Bubis, the President of Germany's Central Council of Jews. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, the Jewish community in Germany, and the many non-Jews in Germany for whom he was a beacon.

Imprisoned in Nazi labor camps while still a boy, Ignaz Bubis lost virtually his entire family in the Holocaust. After the war, he settled in Frankfurt and became a successful businessman and a key figure in the small community that sought to reestablish Jewish life in Germany. He was elected early in this decade to lead Germany's Jewish community, and he used his position to engage his fellow citizens on issues regarding their nation's past and the need for vigilance to uphold the values at the heart of contemporary Germany. Because of the clarity of his vision and the persuasiveness of his message, he became one of his nation's foremost champions of tolerance and openness. He was a friend and valued counselor to many of Germany's leaders. I was greatly impressed by his wisdom and determination to build a more tolerant world.

Ignaz Bubis never ceased to bear witness to history and the consuming evil that was perpetrated earlier in this century. But he also demonstrated that the demands of conscience and the goal of reconciliation are not at odds but instead must be pursued together. At a time when conflicts in the Balkans have confronted Europe and the world

with seemingly intractable hatred, the example of Ignaz Bubis is one we must all heed.

Memorandum Authorizing Support for United Nations War Crimes Tribunal Established With Regard to the Former Yugoslavia

August 17, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-35

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Determination to Authorize the Furnishing of Commodities and Services for the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal Established with Regard to the Former Yugoslavia

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including section 554 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, as enacted in Public Law 105-277, I hereby:

- (a) determine that a drawdown of up to \$5 million of commodities and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of Defense will contribute to a just resolution of charges regarding genocide and other violations of international humanitarian law; and
- (b) direct the drawdown, pursuant to section 552(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2348a (the "Act"), of up to \$5 million in commodities and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of Defense for the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal established with regard to the former Yugoslavia by the United Nations Security Council, without regard to the ceiling limitation contained in section 552(c)(2) of the Act.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Memorandum on Delegation of Responsibilities Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998

August 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Delegation of Responsibilities Under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the functions and authorities vested in the President by title IV, subtitle I (sections 401-409) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292) (the "Act").

Any reference in this memorandum to any act shall be deemed to be a reference to such act as amended from time to time.

The functions delegated by this memorandum may be delegated within the Department of State.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Football Champion University of Tennessee Volunteers

August 17, 1999

The President. Well, Chancellor and Coach Fulmer, Tee, Mercedes—this is the most disgusting pander I've ever seen. [Laughter] You know, Coach Fulmer came up 48 hours ago, and he and Al practiced all this 15 times. [Laughter] We're going to be cited by the Federal Election Commission for this event. [Laughter]

Let me tell you—you know, I'm not running for anything. I can tell you the whole story about this—[laughter]—this Tennessee-Arkansas deal. Everything he said is true. And for all of you who are covering this who aren't from one of the two States, let me—the game was an unbelievable game, and Arkansas was ahead at the end.

And there was only a minute and a half to go, and we seemed to have an insurmountable lead. And our quarterback was trying to kill the clock, a little of the clock. And the Tennessee line broke through the Arkansas offensive line and tackled him behind the line. And he fell, not with his free hand but with the hand on the ball, which squirted out into the arms of Tennessee. And the rest is history.

Who's responsible for that over there? [Laughter] Raise your hand, there. Give him a hand over there. [Applause] Bring that guy up here. Get him up here. Come on.

And what you really don't—what Al couldn't tell you, because he's not like me; I'm not running for anything—[laughter]—is that I was actually watching this game as this foreign policy crisis was unfolding. [Laughter] And I was talking on the phone, injecting things, and they thought, you know, I was being tougher on what was happening on the phone, and I was really just reacting to the ballgame. [Laughter]

But to be fair, to be perfectly fair to Tennessee, I think that you had over 40 yards still to go—

Coach Fulmer. Forty-six.

The President. —for a touchdown, right? Forty-six. [Laughter] So it wasn't like he fumbled on the goal line. And they rolled down there like there was nobody there. And they won the game, and they went on to the national championship.

And I paid off my bet, and—

The Vice President. I'll get you some ribs. [Laughter]

The President. —and we've had a lot of laughs about it.

But I do want to say, you know, I was the first President from my home State ever elected. I owe a lot to Tennessee; if it hadn't been for the Vice President joining the ticket, I might not have won the first time, almost certainly wouldn't have won the second time, because we made all the record we made together. And so I feel deeply indebted.

And all I can say is, we're even now. [Laughter]

Actually, I was very impressed. I like teams, and people, who don't quit, who never say die, and who stick together.

I like the fact that this team had a lot of stars, at different times during the year, but won as a team. You had—Peerless Price caught a, what, a 76- and a 79-yard touchdown pass in the Fiesta Bowl, but he wouldn't have been there to catch those passes if this guy—[laughter]—hadn't broken through the line, somebody else hadn't kicked a field goal, and if all the guys in the line who never get their names called on television didn't show up for every play and play like crazy.

And I think it's important. And I think it's a real tribute to these young men, and to their fine coach. And I think it should be obvious to anybody who knows anything about college football, and anything about this coach, anything about this program, that this is a program, and a team, founded not just on strength and speed and talent but also on thinking and effort and courage and good values.

And in that sense, in winning the national championship and in winning it the way they did, in a highly competitive season, they reflected credit on the entire United States of America.

And every—every—person in America should be proud of them. I certainly am, and I wish you well in getting back next year.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to University of Tennessee President J. Wade Gilley, Coach Phillip Fulmer, and Volunteers team members Tee Martin, Mercedes Hamilton, Travis Henry, and Peerless Price; and University of Arkansas quarterback Clint Stoerner.

Statement on the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse August 18, 1999

Today's 1998 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse reveals that we have turned an important corner on youth drug use. Last year youth drug use declined significantly, and fewer young people tried marijuana for the first time. This encouraging news shows that more young people are getting the message that drugs are wrong and illegal and can

kill you. And today's report contains even more good news: Current cigarette use dropped to the lowest rate ever recorded by the survey.

While these results give us reason to be optimistic, we cannot let up on our efforts. We must continue our unprecedented media campaign to reach our children with powerful antidrug messages, not cut it back just as it is making an impact. We must expand our partnerships with community antidrug coalitions and work to enact our long-term drug strategy. Together, we can steer our children away from drugs and toward a brighter future.

Remarks on the Baby Boom Echo Education Initiative

August 19, 1999

Thank you very much, and welcome to the announcement of the administration's program to save the future for Secretary Riley's grandchildren. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your passionate dedication and leadership. Thank you, Wendell Greer. I also want to acknowledge here people who will be involved in, I think, briefing later: Dan Galloway, who is the principal of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois; Dr. Daniel Domenech, the superintendent of the Fairfax County Schools; and Dr. Iris Metts, the superintendent of the Prince George's County Schools, who was here at the White House with us when I signed the ed-flex bill last April.

This is a busy time for educators, and I appreciate them for taking the time to join us. It's a busy time for parents and students, too, thinking about the back-to-school season. In so many ways it represents a new beginning. People get used to new teachers, new classmates, new schoolbooks, new jeans and clothes. It reminds us of the vital role that education plays in our children's lives and in the life of our Nation.

Today I want to talk about what the previous speakers have said in terms of what it means for America, not just in a new school year but in a new century. In our lifetimes we have never had a better chance to prepare

America's children and America's schools for the demands of the 21st century. We can do it because of the longest peacetime expansion in our history, the highest homeownership, over 19 million new jobs, welfare at a 32 year low, crime a 26-year low, teen smoking, teen pregnancy, and as our annual survey showed just yesterday, teen drug abuse all down. We have a record surplus of \$99 billion, and it's projected to grow and to sustain itself over the next 10 years.

Now, there's a great debate in Washington about what we should do with this surplus and, in a larger sense, how to fulfill the promise and the obligation of preparing our schools and our children for the 21st century. How will we seize this chance to shape the future?

The big challenge, as Secretary Riley said, is that we're going to have young people in record numbers. They are also more diverse than ever before, and therefore, educating them represents more interesting and diverse challenges than ever before. But it's also important to recognize that, ironically, as we have young people in record numbers, we will also have senior citizens in record numbers. The number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years.

So the question is, how are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America, the challenge of the swelling ranks of our schoolchildren, when education is more important not only to them but to our Nation than ever before, and how are we going to keep this economy going and spread its opportunities to the people who have not yet felt them?

I believe, as all of you know, that we should make a commitment to invest in our future and to do it in a way that enables us to save Social Security, to save and strengthen Medicare, to invest in education, and to pay off the publicly held debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835, which will guarantee us long-term lower interest rates for everything from business investment to home mortgages to college loans to car payments.

We can do all this and still have sensible tax cuts. We cannot do it unless we make the commitments to do first things first.

Today we are releasing a report by the Department of Education that makes it clear that any part of a long-term successful strategy for America requires us to do more, not less, to meet our children's growing educational needs. Every year the halls of our schools resound more loudly with what has been called, as Secretary Riley said, the baby boom echo.

The children of the baby boom generation are breaking enrollment records for the fourth year in a row now. This academic year, 53.2 million students will fill our elementary and secondary schools. That's nearly half a million more than last year. All the details are in this report, and they will be released later today. But think about it, over 53 million students, more diverse than ever before, from more backgrounds, giving us a chance to be the best prepared country in the world for the global society of the 21st century if, but only if, we educate them well.

There's another thing I want to emphasize about it that this report said that I just hadn't thought about until I was briefed on it. The pattern of enrollment is changing. As the children grow older, it is the high schools and colleges, even more than the elementary and middle schools, that will carry the burden. During the next decade, our high schools are projected to swell with the ranks of 1.3 million new students. This report gives our Nation an important assignment, to make the investments necessary to meet the demands of the future and our obligations to these children.

We've worked hard for 6½ years to invest in education and to bring real change to our schools. Secretary Riley's leadership has helped us to make historic investments. We've opened the doors to college to virtually every American with the HOPE scholarship and increased Pell grants and other loans and grants and credits. We have worked hard—and I think we're going to make it—to connect every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000. We have worked to strengthen performance and accountability in our schools and to help them meet the Nation's educational goals.

But Principal Greer described the conditions that exist in an awful lot of our schools, far too many—overcrowded classes held in

trailers, the shortage of individual attention by trained teachers. The challenges are going to increase as enrollment rises and a projected 2 million of our teachers retire in the next few years.

The baby boom echo is another reason why I feel so strongly that we have to act now, to build new schools and fix old ones, to hire trained teachers, especially in math and science, especially for our high schools. I have proposed, as part of our balanced budget, to build or renovate up to 6,000 schools nationwide; and to fulfill the commitment I made to Congress to hire 100,000 new teachers for our Nation's schools, to lower class size in the early grades, coincidentally freeing up resources for our schools to hire the other teachers they need in other areas.

Unfortunately, the congressional majority wants to back off from our commitment to more teachers and smaller classes, and the tax plan they have proposed would do further damage to those priorities. It would not do anything approaching what we've proposed to build or modernize schools—about a tenth of what we recommended. It would not allow us to pay off the debt. It would not add a day to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund or the Medicare Trust Fund. It would also lead, if the present budget discipline holds, to substantial, even drastic cuts in education and other national priorities, like national defense, medical research, and fighting crime and protecting the environment.

Now I have said that I will veto this plan, and I know that there's a lot of hoopla going on around the country, from town meetings to paid political ads, to try to change the opinion of the American people. But no matter how much advertising is done or how much argument is made—since we're talking about education today, I think one of the central achievements of this administration has been to restore arithmetic to the budgeting of the Government. *[Laughter]* You know, this is not trigonometry. This is not algebra. This is not calculus, and it is not supply side economics. It's basic arithmetic.

We got from a \$290 billion deficit to a \$99 billion surplus while almost doubling our investment in education and training by going back to arithmetic in Washington. And no

amount of argument will change the arithmetic of the population of the kids going into our schools. No amount of argument will change the arithmetic of the doubling of our seniors. No amount of argument will change the arithmetic that there are going to be relatively fewer people working while more people draw Social Security and Medicare. No amount of argument will change the arithmetic of the number of teachers who are going to retire. And the truth is that the American people deep down inside sort of sense this.

So yes, I'll veto the tax plan. But let's don't stop with a negative. Let's make something good happen here. This is about something positive. This can be a great thing for America, having all these kids in the schools from all these different backgrounds. They can make us a bigger, stronger, more diverse, richer, more successful country.

But we have to do right by them. We've got to give them a good economy. We've got to make sure that when the baby boomers retire, the parents of these children don't have to spend money that they would otherwise spend educating their children and helping them grow, taking care of their parents because we haven't done right by Social Security and Medicare. And we've got to give them a decent, world-class education. And if we could just go back to arithmetic, we can figure it out.

Now let me tell you what the alternative is. If this tax bill that's just passed, if I said, "Oh, well, they had all these town meetings, and they had all these ads," and, "Oh, the polls have changed," and, "Oh, I better sign it," and "Oh, we had a big celebration here," within fairly short order, we would find the following: Today, we help 12 million kids in poor communities to make more of their education. If the tax plan passes, over the new few years, we'd have to tell 6 million of them we couldn't do it anymore. Today, we help a million children learn to read independently by the third grade. If the plan passes, we'd have to tell more than half of them we couldn't help them anymore. Today, we're nearing our goal of enrolling a million preschoolers in Head Start. If the plan were to pass, we'd have to turn over 400,000 away.

Compared to our proposal, this tax plan would mean to those already in school—never mind the ones that are coming, already in school—larger classes, fewer teachers, more trailers. That's what it means. Sounds like a country song, doesn't it? *[Laughter]* Larger classes, fewer teachers, more trailers. *[Laughter]* I like country music, but we can do better than that. *[Laughter]*

So again I say, let's put first things first. Let's decide—before we do the tax cut, let's decide what we have to do as a nation to be a great nation. Let's decide what it takes to take care of the aging of America, so the children of the baby boomers don't have to take funds away from raising their grandchildren; to save Social Security and Medicare. Let's decide what it takes, in addition to the surplus generated by Social Security taxes, to just get us out of debt in the next several years, to guarantee a whole generation of lower interest rates and higher economic growth. Let's decide what we have to do to give our children a world-class education.

Then let's put that against the projected surplus—and I emphasize the word "projected"—and string all those numbers out for 10 years, along with whatever we think we have to do for our farmers, who are getting killed out there in this very difficult international market; what we have to do for medical research; what it takes to protect the environment; and subtract from the projected surplus those things, after which there will be a number. Let's give that number back to the American people in a tax cut. And you know, since it's 10 years and it's projected, maybe there's some little play one way or the other but not a lot.

Now, ironically, the tax cut I proposed gives about the same dollar benefits to the middle class as the one that the Congress passed. People in my income group wouldn't get anything out of it, but people in my income group, by and large, and higher, have done pretty well in this economy, in this stock market, and care far more about keeping interest rates down and economic growth going, because they know they'll do well.

The only other thing that I think is very important is, I think that my new markets tax cuts ought to pass, because I think we

ought to give investors the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas around the world now, from the Caribbean to Latin America to Africa to Asia, so that we can keep economic growth going by bringing economic opportunity to the communities that haven't had it yet and to the people who haven't had it yet.

We can do this if we go back to priorities and arithmetic. What's the most important thing? A time like this comes along once in a generation. People my age, to 10 or 15 years older than me, to 20 years younger than me, they've never known anything like this. Never have we had an opportunity like this.

And with our children going back to school, with more of them than ever, with the educational needs crying out there—and, I might add, one thing that Secretary Riley didn't say, to toot his own horn and the horn of these educators back here and all the rest of you, is that we now know what works. The test scores are going up. We're learning how to educate this incredibly diverse group of kids. And if we make the right investments in the right way, we can get the right results.

So again I say, let's have the right priorities. Let's make an "A" in arithmetic. Let's think about the 21st century and all these children. We'll make the right decisions.

Thank you very much

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Wendell Greer, principal, Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles, CA, who introduced the President.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

August 19, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period April 1, 1999, to May 31, 1999. The previous submission covered events during February 1999 and March 1999.

NATO's 50th Anniversary Summit in Washington this past April brought an opportunity to engage with Greek and Turkish leaders on the Cyprus problem. I met there with Turkish President Demirel and Greek Prime Minister Simitis to underscore the importance of a just and lasting solution for all Cypriots. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright delivered a similar message to her Greek and Turkish counterparts in discussions on the possibilities for resuming negotiations in the fall. My Administration will continue efforts to bring about a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 20.

Statement on the Federal Budget Surplus

August 20, 1999

Today I am pleased to announce that we are on track to reach the largest annual budget surplus ever. Thanks to solid fiscal discipline, the surplus at this point in the fiscal year is \$69.1 billion, the largest in history over a comparable period and more than \$20 billion over last year's level.

When I came into office just over 6 years ago, our Nation was burdened by a staggering \$290 billion deficit that was projected to reach over \$400 billion by this fiscal year. The Vice President and I, working with Congress, set this country on a new course of fiscal discipline, enacting two strong budget packages in 1993 and 1997. As a result, we have begun to pay down the Nation's debt. By the end of this fiscal year we expect to have achieved a \$142 billion reduction in publicly held debt over the last 2 years. The debt is now \$1.7 trillion less than was projected in 1993 when President Clinton took office.

Fiscal responsibility and resulting debt reduction lowers long-term interest rates for home mortgages, autos, and student loans. It also lowers borrowing costs for businesses,

fueling private sector investments for continued economic growth. Despite the continuing good news, this is not a time for complacency. The tax bill passed by Congress would reverse the achievement of fiscal discipline that has been so critical in making the American economy the strongest it has been in generations. We need to continue our progress and remain committed to our successful economic strategy of making responsible investments in our people and maintaining fiscal discipline. We now have an historic opportunity to work together in a responsible way to pay off the national debt and strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 15

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled from Camp David, MD, to New Rochelle, NY, and in the afternoon, they returned to Camp David.

August 16

In the morning, the President traveled to Kansas City, MO, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President declared a major disaster in Utah and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a tornado, severe thunderstorms, and hail on August 11.

The President declared a major disaster in Wisconsin and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, straight-line winds, and flooding beginning on July 4 and continuing through July 31.

August 17

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard Brown as a member of the

President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

August 18

The President announced his intention to nominate Jay W. Johnson to be Director of the Mint at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to appoint Raj Reddy and Irving Wladawsky-Berger as Co-Chairs of the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee.

August 19

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Martha's Vineyard, MA.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton celebrated the President's birthday at the residence of Vernon Jordan.

The President announced his intention to appoint Carol A. Cartwright as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The White House announced that the President appointed Deputy Assistant Attorney General Beth Nolan as Assistant to the President and Counsel to the President beginning in September.

August 20

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Nantucket, MA, where in the evening they attended an American Ireland Fund dinner.

Later, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Martha's Vineyard, MA.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on August 6 and continuing through August 9.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

***Released August 14*¹**

Transcript of a press briefing by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner and Office of Management and Budget Associate Director for Natural Resources Elgie Holstein on the President's radio address

Released August 16

Fact sheet: The President's International Affairs Budget: Investments in Peace

Released August 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Released August 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Released August 19

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Beth Nolan as Assistant to the President and Counsel to the President

Announcement: U.S. Special Envoy for the Americas Presses for Increased Economic Cooperation on Eight-Day Trip to South America

¹ This transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on August 14.

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved August 17

H.R. 211 / Public Law 106-48
To designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 920 West Riverside Avenue in Spokane, Washington, as the "Thomas S. Foley United States Courthouse", and the plaza at the south entrance of such building and courthouse as the "Walter F. Horan Plaza"

H.R. 1219 / Public Law 106-49
Construction Industry Payment Protection Act of 1999

H.R. 1568 / Public Law 106-50
Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999

H.R. 1664 / Public Law 106-51
Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee and Emergency Oil and Gas Guaranteed Loan Act of 1999

H.R. 2465 / Public Law 106-52
Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2000

S. 507 / Public Law 106-53
Water Resources Development Act of 1999

S. 606 / Public Law 106-54
For the relief of Global Exploration and Development Corporation, Kerr-McGee Corporation, and Kerr-McGee Chemical, LLC (successor to Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation), and for other purposes

S. 1546 / Public Law 106-55
To amend the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to provide additional administrative authorities to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and to make technical corrections to that Act, and for other purposes